

## Crisis Management

Here are eleven key things you should do when the alarm bell of a crisis goes off. Try to accomplish the first nine within 24 hours,

1. Recognize that you have a crisis and, if you do, don't deny it,
2. Immediately set up crisis-management team with absolutely clear delegation of decision-making authorities and with a single, official spokesperson for the whole organization,
3. Prepare senior staff for being interviewed (even ambushed) by reporters and tell all other relevant staff how you want them to handle media inquires,
4. At the same time all senior staff must be seen as organization spokespeople who know and can deliver the current talking points and who know how and when to refer inquiries to the organization's official spokesperson,
5. Be seen and heard doing the right things-be visible,
6. You go to the media, they must not be ignored or, worse, stonewalled, during a crisis, set up a communication process with the media as quickly as possible knowing that television is the most important medium for getting your message out,
7. Talk about people first, property and resources second, money third, and say nothing about the work load and inconvenience for you,
8. Acknowledge the feelings the crisis has given others and state your feelings about the situation and, as soon as you know it, how it will be prevented from happening again; this is also a good place to list the values you will use to guide your response,
9. Become the single most authoritative source of information about the crisis,
10. Keep a close eye on media coverage and take every opportunity to correct inaccurate reporting, and
11. Reach out directly and personally to the people most affected; you want them to know you care about them and, while you want to have others see you doing this, reach out even if nobody is there to report on your caring act to the people impacted by the crisis.

What might be the cost to you or your organization's reputation if you handle a crisis poorly? More than if you act fast, act decisively, and act with authenticity. Manage the crisis or it will manage you.